

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

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AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTREAL 826

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LONDON FOR AMBASSADOR BOYD

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAIR, UK, CA

SUBJ: CIVAIR, US-UK BILATERAL QUESTION - MONTREAL PRECLEARANCE

REF: LONDON 8249, PARA 3

1. DISCUSSION WITH USG OFFICIALS IN CHARGE OF PRECLEARANCE CUSTOMS AND IMMIGRATION PROCEDURES IN MONTREAL INDICATE THAT DIVERSION OF BA'S US TRAFFIC THROUGH MONTREAL COULD NOT BE HANDLED WITHOUT SIZEABLE INCREASE IN STAFFING BY CUSTOMS. US IMMIGRATION COULD HANDLE INCREASED TRAFFIC OVER SHORT TERM BY WORKING OVERTIME SHIFTS. DIFFICULTIES IN HANDLING INCREASED TRAFFIC WOULD BE EXACERBATED IF ARRIVALS ARE BUNCHED, PARTICULARLY IF FLIGHTS SHOULD COINCIDE WITH CURRENT PEAK HOURS OF 6-9 IN MORNING AND 5-7 IN AFTERNOON.

2. INCREASED TRAFFIC WOULD HAVE GREATEST IMPACT ON US CUSTOMS, AS WORK FORCE MUST MAN NUMBER OF STATIONS SPREAD THROUGHOUT AIRPORT. CURRENT STAFF, NUMBERING 26, HANDLES AROUND 2,600 PASSENGERS A DAY, WITH NORMAL SEASONAL INCREASE EX-
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PECTED TO BEGIN IN JUNE. IF BA'S US PASSENGERS ARE TO BE HANDLED WITHOUT DELAY IN FLIGHTS, CUSTOM'S STAFF WOULD HAVE TO BE INCREASED BY 20 TO 25 INSPECTORS. WITHOUT INCREASE IN STAFF, US CUSTOMS CANNOT, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, HANDLE CANADA DIVERTED US TRAFFIC. WITH INCREASE IN STAFF OF 10-15, CUSTOMS COULD PROBABLY MANAGE FOR SHORT PERIOD THROUGH USE OF OVERTIME, BUT EMPLOYEE MORALE, HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE WOULD BE PROBLEM,

AND FLIGHT DEPARTURES WOULD BE DELAYED.

3. AS US IMMIGRATION STAFF IS CONCENTRATED IN ONE AREA OF AIRPORT, INCREASED TRAFFIC COULD BE HANDLED OVER SHORT PERIOD BY USE OF OVERTIME. IF STAFF DOES NOT WORK OVERTIME, INCREASE IN NUMBER OF PASSENGERS BECAUSE OF DIVERSION TO CANADA WOULD CAUSE DELAYS OF APPROXIMATELY ONE HOUR IN AIRCRAFT DEPARTURES. IF DIVERSIONS ARE TO BE HANDLED OVER EXTENDED PERIOD, IMMIGRATION WOULD NEED TO EXPAND ITS CURRENT STAFF OF 11 BY AN ADDITIONAL 4 EMPLOYEES.

4. U.S. CUSTOMS REPORTS THAT IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE TO IMPLEMENT PRECLEARANCE PROCEDURES AT MIRABEL, EVEN WITH INCREASE IN STAFF, AS TERMINAL NOW IN USE AT MIRABEL IS DESIGNED FOR ARRIVING TRAFFIC ONLY. ARRANGEMENTS AND LAYOUT OF BUILDING WILL NOT PERMIT SECURE SEPARATION OF DEPARTING TRAFFIC NECESSARY FOR EFFECTIVE CUSTOMS OPERATIONS. UNDER PLANS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF MIRABEL, PRECLEARANCE PROCEDURES ARE TO BE IMPLEMENTED ONLY WHEN NEW SECOND TERMINAL, DESIGNED FOR DEPARTING TRAFFIC, IS CONSTRUCTED IN 1982-3.

5. BOTH US AGENCIES POINTED OUT THAT INCREASE IN WORK LOAD WOULD RESULT NOT ONLY FROM INCREASE IN NUMBER OF PASSENGERS, BUT FROM FACT THAT TRAFFIC ORIGINATING IN EUROPE WOULD BE SUBJECT TO MORE RIGOROUS INSPECTION THAN IS CASE WITH NORMAL CANADIAN TRAFFIC.
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